

Naval Special Warfare deployments in support of Theater Commanders: Special Operations Forces or Naval Support Elements?

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Subject Area – National Military Strategy

### *Executive Summary*

**Title:** Naval Special Warfare deployments in support of Theater Commanders: Special Operations Forces or Naval Support Elements?

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**Thesis:** Is assignment to the theater Special Operations Command the optimal utilization of Naval Special Warfare detachments? Can all of the fleet's Naval Special Warfare requirements be met through the theater Special Operations Commands, or is it imperative to have organic SEALs within the fleet?

**Discussion:** Naval Special Warfare (NSW) has a unique requirement to provide operational support as both Special Operations Forces and naval support elements. Their support to both fleet and Special Operations commanders has been a source of controversy since the 1987 inception of the US Special Operations Command. Special Operations advocates propose that all Naval Special Warfare forces should be assigned under operational control (OPCON) of the theater Special Operations Command who will provide forces as necessary to support fleet operations. Navy and Marine Corps advocates are not convinced that traditional amphibious and maritime operational requirements will be adequately supported if OPCON is relinquished.

As the geographic Commanders-in-Chief (CINC) gained power and influence, so too did the sub-unified theater Special Operations Commands. The operational primacy of the theater Special Operations Command has served to negate the utility of having NSW assets as integral members of the Carrier Battle Group and Amphibious Ready Group. Special Operations mission requirements are usually tasked from the theater CINC very early in the planning phase, usually designating the theater Special Operations Command as the Joint Special Operations Task Force. Even in the littoral area, the SEALs on the ship will likely not be tasked because the joint force SEALs will have already been employed to fulfill the requirement.

**Recommendation:** Recommend NSW forces provide SOF support to naval operations through the well-established theater Special Operations Command structure. The Special Operations Commands are manned, equipped, and trained to employ and support SOF forces in all operating environments, in support of any component within the US Armed Forces. Fleet commands are not structured to provide the same capability in an exclusively maritime environment, let alone the complex littoral battlespace envisioned for future operations.

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## *Preface*

This analysis of Naval Special Warfare deployments is limited to the European and Central Command areas of responsibility. Although the text is limited to two of the five geographic theaters, the conclusions drawn from the analysis are relative to all operating areas, including the Southern, Pacific, and Atlantic regions.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Contentious Naval Special Warfare Deployment Duality**

The 1986 Defense Reorganization Act and its 1987 Cohen-Nunn amendment established the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), a unified command responsible for the control of all Special Operations Forces (SOF). The goal of the act was to provide common SOF tactics, techniques, and procedures in a joint Army, Navy, and Air Force operating environment. The command was to become responsible for funding, training, equipping, and deploying SOF forces in support of geographic theater command requirements.

Naval Special Warfare (NSW) forces comprised of Navy Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) commandos and Special Boat Unit (SBU) combatant craft crewmen were designated as the SOF naval component. These forces possess unique maritime capabilities required for the conduct of amphibious operations. These unique capabilities require some NSW units to be assigned directly to naval forces rather than to SOF units. This practice has produced an operational duality with Naval Special Warfare deployments since the inception of USSOCOM: Two SEAL platoons with essentially the same capabilities are forward deployed to the same geographic theater but have vastly different employment

opportunities based on their assignment to support either the fleet or theater Special Operations Command (SOC).<sup>1</sup>

The employment of Naval Special Warfare forces has been a contentious issue since Special Operations advocates first identified the Navy SEALs and Special Boat Units as the Navy's Special Operations Forces. Identified as such, legislators and Special Operations advocates expected the NSW forces to be the Navy's contribution to the USSOCOM force structure. The Navy leadership had a different opinion with respect to their NSW forces. They opined that the SEALs and Special Boat assets were integral forces within the fleet, based on their traditional amphibious pre-assault responsibilities. At the time, the SEALs and their Underwater Demolition Team predecessors functioned as vital elements of amphibious operations that spanned from World War II to Operation *URGENT FURY* in Grenada.

Immediately following the legislation introducing USSOCOM as a unified command, the US Navy, led by Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Carlisle Trost

agreed to establish a Naval Special Warfare Command as a component of USSOCOM, but it would not include combat forces since the SEALs, Special Boat Units, and SEAL Delivery Vehicle<sup>2</sup> units were to stay within the Navy. Navy leadership argued that the SEALs had a "unique" relationship with the fleet commanders and, therefore, the Naval Special Warfare Groups should be assigned to the naval components of the Pacific Command (USPACOM) and the Atlantic Command (LANTCOM)."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Although they share the same core Naval Special Warfare mission capabilities, SEAL platoons will conduct interoperability training with the units with which they deploy. As a result, a Special Operations Command SEAL platoon will work more with Air Force Special Operations assets while Amphibious Ready Group SEAL Platoons will train with amphibious Navy and Marine Corps deployers, and Strike SEAL Platoons will train with the ships, airplanes, and submarines of the Carrier Battle Group.

<sup>2</sup> A SEAL Delivery Vehicle is a free-flooding wet submersible capable of transporting swimmers or ordnance over distances much greater than the capabilities of unaided combat swimmers. The battery-powered craft is controlled by a two-man SEAL pilot-navigator element and can be operated from shore, ship, or specially configured submarine.

<sup>3</sup> Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare – Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997), 158.

In his first quarterly report as the new Commander in Chief of USSOCOM, General James Lindsay recommended a different plan regarding assignment of the SEALs to then Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger:

We urge that the Special Operations Forces of all services be assigned to USSOCOM. Specifically, while Army and Air Force SOF units are assigned through their component command structures, Navy SEALs remain assigned to their respective fleet commands. By assigning the Special Warfare Groups to the Navy Special Warfare Command, USSOC will have the ability to develop joint doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures and enhance the research, development, and acquisition of special operations materiel, supplies, and services for all SOF forces. SOF support to the fleet would be improved by such an arrangement.<sup>4</sup>

General Lindsay's recommendation was realized in October 1987 when Secretary Weinberger decided that all Naval Special Warfare forces would be assigned to USSOCOM.<sup>5</sup> However, owing to the "unique" relationship addressed above, NSW units have continued to deploy in direct support of fleet requirements under the operational control (OPCON) of an afloat Navy commander. In addition to the fleet deployments, NSW detachments have been executing regularly scheduled rotational deployments under the OPCON of theater Special Operations Commands (SOCs).

All deploying SEAL platoons and Special Boat Unit detachments share the same core capabilities and mission essential tasks, regardless of their OPCON assignments.<sup>6</sup> However, the two routine NSW deployment types detailed above have separate and distinct command relationships and mobility assets. These differences have resulted in vastly different deployments with dissimilar employment histories.

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<sup>4</sup> General James J. Lindsay letter to Casper W. Weinberger, June 30, 1987, quoted in Marquis, 159.

<sup>5</sup> Marquis, 162.

<sup>6</sup> Appendix B lists SEAL platoon Mission Essential Tasks.

Naval Special Warfare has been supporting both the fleet and SOC components for over a decade since the establishment of the SOC command structure. Through time and experience, the NSW community has established effective procedures for operating within both command structures. However, two unrelated factors have acted as a catalyst for change in the NSW deployment process. These two factors are the concept of joint warfare and its effect on NSW employment, and an increase in operational commitments.

The maturation of the Department of Defense's joint warfare concept has resulted in a well-defined SOF role. The geographic theater CINCs have structured their commands in order to maximize the utility of having rapidly deployable, culturally aware SOF forces as their first response to regional contingencies. Naval Special Warfare SEALs and SBU assets provide the Naval SOF (NAVSOF) component within the joint architecture.

Increased SOF mission requirements stemming from aggressive theater engagement strategies, coupled with the country's increased involvement in Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), have resulted in a large increase in operational tempo for the NSW community. NSW forces assigned to the theater SOCs on regularly scheduled deployments have increased twofold in some instances over the past decade.<sup>7</sup> These increased operational requirements called for a related increase in NSW personnel

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<sup>7</sup> Since the mid 1990's, SEAL platoons deployed in support of the theater SOC has increased from one to two platoons for both SOCEUR and SOCSOUTH commands.



manning strengths. However, the concurrent drawdown within the military during the period coupled with the inability to “mass produce” new NSW personnel forced NSW leaders to contemplate alternative deployment methods in order to better utilize the force.

### **Analysis of the Duality**

The NSW operational duality of supporting both fleet and SOF commands has resulted in an inefficient dual-use of NSW resources. As the geographic commanders-in-chiefs (CINCs) have matured, so too have their theater SOCs. The CINCs use their SOCs for contingency planning, usually employing SOF as the first step in contingency resolution. If the contingency has a requirement to employ maritime SOF, the theater SOC tasks his SEALs to conduct the mission. In such a command structure, the SOF mission requirement is identified by the SOF component that in turn provides the force to satisfy the requirement. The NSW assets assigned to the fleet are external to the SOF command structure and are neither considered nor tasked as a result.

The operational primacy of the theater SOC has served to negate the utility of having NSW assets as integral members of the naval Carrier Battle Group and Amphibious Ready Group. A comparison of past NSW fleet and SOC deployments reveals that fleet NSW assets are under-utilized while their theater SOC counterparts are not. A review of NSW post-deployment reports for EUCOM deployments in support of the US SIXTH Fleet reveals that the majority of the detachment commanders recommend changes to the current practice of deploying as shipboard elements of the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) or Carrier Battle Group (CVBG). The reports cite their assignment on board ship as a bar to employment because of a lack of operational taskings and limited mobility.

The common recommendation is to forward deploy based ashore in order to hone perishable skills and to leverage theater SOC command and mobility. While the SOC advocates fully support such an initiative, Navy advocates are skeptical. Naval leaders are not convinced that their NSW-specific operational requirements can be met through a force provided through the theater SOC as effectively as an organic afloat NSW element.

Regardless of who they work for, the purpose of NSW is to provide maritime-focused Special Operations support to operating forces. The chapters that follow compare the operational employment of NSW detachments assigned in support of theater fleet and Special Operations commands. NSW employment will be analyzed through case studies of past operations with both fleet and Special Operations Forces participation. The analysis will address the debate surrounding NSW command relationships with respect to the Navy, Marine Corps, and Special Operations Forces advocates. NSW employment will then be considered in the context of supporting the forces of the future as described by joint doctrine, joint vision, and service future concepts such as *Joint Vision 2010*, *Forward...From the Sea: The Navy Operational Concept*, and *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*.

## Chapter 2

### Case Studies

The following case studies illustrate the significant differences in employment experienced by NSW forces assigned to fleet and SOC commands within the same theater of operations. The studies detail NSW participation in operations and exercises that occurred within a three-year period (1996-1999) in the EUCOM and CENTCOM theaters.

#### **Operation *ASSURED RESPONSE***

On 3 April 1996, a CT-43A [transport aircraft] crashed on a mountainside above Dubrovnik, Croatia, killing all 35 aboard. Included as passengers were Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown and a number of corporate executives, as well as the Air Force crew. Special Operations helicopters flew to the crash site in some of the worst flying conditions in the Balkans. SOCEUR then ran the recovery effort under very arduous conditions—extreme cold and wet, and rugged mountainside terrain. As these SOF were finishing the recovery effort, SOCEUR had to respond to a crisis in Liberia, as the civil war spread to Monrovia and endangered Americans and other foreign nationals. The US had to deploy forces quickly to save lives, and the only integrated force with its own airlift and strike force ready and available was SOCEUR. In fact, within hours of redeploying from Dubrovnik to Stuttgart on 7 April, SOF, aboard an MC-130 Combat Talon II, had launched for Sierra Leone, the intermediate staging base. Using its Air Force MH-53J helicopters (augmented later by Army MH-47D helicopters), SOCEUR sent first SEALs, on 9 April, and then Special Forces to provide security for the US embassy and implement an orderly evacuation of Americans and third country nationals. On 13 April, the Psychological Operations Task Force began conducting force protection loud speaker operations in and around the American embassy. SOF had

the situation well in hand and had evacuated 436 Americans and 1,677 foreign nationals when the Marines relieved Commander, SOCEUR on 20 April 1996.<sup>8</sup>

Operation *ASSURED RESPONSE* demonstrated the responsiveness and mobility inherent to the theater SOC. In this case, the SEALs were selected to be the first forces on the scene because of their responsiveness. They were able to task-organize and equip themselves for the mission better than any other available force.<sup>9</sup> In stark contrast, the SEALs assigned to the ARG that responded to the crisis did not participate in the operation. By the time the Marines arrived with the ARG on 20 April, there was no mission requirement for the SEALs organic to the force. Consequently, the ARG SEALs remained afloat for the duration of the operation while their counterparts assigned to the SOC returned to Stuttgart in order to execute further taskings.

In essence, the SOCEUR SEALs completed the advance force mission required to facilitate the Marine operations ashore. The operation clearly depicted the inefficient nature of the NSW deployment duality: The fleet SEALs were afloat, transiting as an integral part of the ARG to ensure NSW support was readily available when required, but the fleet SEALs found themselves without a tasking because the advance force preparation of the objective area was previously identified and satisfied by the theater SOC (SOCEUR).

### **Exercise *SIXTH FLEET INVITEX 97***

*INVITEX 97* was a Commander SIXTH Fleet (COMSIXTHFLT) sea power exercise with CVBG, ARG, and MEU(SOC) forces conducting operations in the Southern

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<sup>8</sup>USSOCOM, *United States Special Operations Command 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History* (MacDill AFB, FL, 1997), 55.

Adriatic and Northern Ionian Seas. NSW Task Group-SIXTHFLT, a task-organized battle staff commanded by a post-command SEAL officer forward deployed from Italy to *USS ROOSEVELT*. The task group's mission was to provide command and control for NSW forces assigned to both the CVBG and ARG.

The significance of NSW TG-SIXTHFLT was the commander's ability to provide non-organic forces to better support the fleet task groups. The task group provided additional non-organic SEAL augmentation to both the CVBG and ARG for manpower-intensive Maritime Interdiction Operations. The SOF highlight of the exercise was the use of AF SOF rotary wing assets to support a SEAL mission ashore which originated from ARG shipping hundreds of miles from the objective area. The mission was originally intended for the CVBG's Strike SEAL Platoon, but the objective was out of the HH-60H combat radius. A SOCEUR MH-53J Pave Low helicopter coordinated by NSW TG-SIXTHFLT executed the mission.

The NSW missions conducted during *INVITEX 97* were significant because they demonstrated the utility of non-organic SOF support to the fleet. The MH-53J airlift provided through SOCEUR was not considered until after the exercise commenced and NSW mission planning identified the mobility shortfall. SOCEUR provided unanticipated SOF support to the ARG on short notice, enabling quality training that would have otherwise been unachievable. The benefit of the joint training was twofold: It exposed the ARG/MEU(SOC) team to the utility of SOF support external to their force structure. The training also demonstrated the SOCEUR commander's commitment to support fleet operations even on short notice.

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen Grzeszczak, SOCEUR SEAL element commander during Operation *ASSURED RESPONSE*,

### **Exercise *ISLAND THUNDER 97***

*ISLAND THUNDER* was a Joint/Combined amphibious and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) training exercise with Italian Army, US Army, Navy, SOF, and Marine forces conducted in January 1997. NSWTG-SIXTHFLT again forward deployed for enhanced NSW command and control, this time embarking on ARG shipping to command NSW support to landing force efforts.

As he did for *INVITEX*, the NSWTG commander leveraged non-organic mobility assets to better support the afloat commander. In this case, SEAL Delivery Vehicle Team TWO, Task Unit BRAVO, and one SEAL squad from the ARG conducted advance force operations from *USS ARCHERFISH*, a specially configured, SDV-equipped submarine. The submarine and its embarked NSW personnel were able to conduct advance force operations well ahead of the ARG ships still days behind. Working from beyond the confines of the ARG enabled the NSW element to collect hydrographic reconnaissance data on four potential landing beaches and perform LZ reconnaissance on five potential landing zones within the Amphibious Objective Area (AOA).

IPB efforts conducted by the SSN/NSW team permitted the widest dissemination of hydrographic and intelligence data to all planners and landing craft crews with enough time to perform detailed planning. This type of crucial intelligence is not available in a timely manner when NSW elements are confined to operating from the ARG shipping using organic mobility assets.

*INVITEX and ISLAND THUNDER* missions support the SOC-centric argument that Naval Special Warfare (SEAL) forces would be best utilized in support of ARG/MEU

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interview by author, 12 January 2000.

Commanders as an operational level asset, shaping the operating area through IPB well prior to the ARG's arrival. With well trained Force Reconnaissance, Battalion Reconnaissance, and Radio Reconnaissance teams within his forces, the MEU Commander has an abundance of tactical assets. SEALs train to Special Reconnaissance as a primary SOF mission. As such, SEALs need to be deployed well in advance of the ARG in order to maximize intelligence collection and dissemination to amphibious planners. The optimal means to provide such timely NSW support is through the theater SOC, the mechanism already established by joint doctrine and theater practice.

An interesting development arose during *ISLAND THUNDER* as a result of having organic SOF (NSW) within the ARG. The joint nature of the exercise required SOCEUR to provide a JSOTF with its corresponding Joint Special Operations Area designated within the exercise operating area. The NSW assets assigned to NSWTG-SIXTHFLT belonged to the naval force, not the JSOTF. As a result, deconfliction difficulties arose with respect to mission taskings and operating areas. Exercise planners used AOA boundaries as control measures between the Joint and Navy SOF. This severely limited the utility of the SDV and SEALs embarked on the submarine. The SEALs possessed a unique capability to conduct over-the-beach missions outside the AOA, but were not considered because they were not JSOTF forces.

## **Operation *SILVER WAKE***

*SILVER WAKE* was a NEO contingency conducted in Tirana, Albania, in March 1997 with COMSIXTHFLT as the JTF Commander. Owing to their demonstrated ability to provide the fleet with additional SOF capabilities during two previous exercises, NSWTG-SIXTHFLT was once again forward deployed to the ARG. Organic NSW assets were not required for the NEO, but the NSWTG did facilitate AFsOF support to the MEU(SOC) effort ashore by coordinating dedicated AC-130J gunship support over the objective area.

Although the NSWTG-SIXTHFLT commander and his battle staff were extremely effective at leveraging non-organic mobility to enhance the effectiveness of afloat NSW forces during Exercises *INVITEX* and *ISLAND THUNDER*, its utility was not realized for real-world NSW contingency tasking during *SILVER WAKE*. The operation had progressed beyond the point where SOF employment for IPB was value-added. A SOCEUR sourced EUCOM Survey and Assessment team already in place at the US Embassy provided planning and forward command element information to the MEU(SOC) NEO force. The team's presence and communication abilities facilitated the preparation normally associated with the ARG's advance force capabilities provided by NSW and reconnaissance Marines.

An analogy can be drawn between the embarked NSW forces during both *ASSURED RESPONSE* and *SILVER WAKE*. In both instances, the insertion of SOCEUR forces early in the crises provided the advance force IPB supporting the MEU(SOC) commander's efforts. The SOF response time and mobility facilitated a high operational



tempo that could not be accomplished by the organic SOF, namely NSW, resident within the ARG.

### **Operation *GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL***

As Operation *SILVER WAKE* progressed, Navy and Marine Corps planners of the NASSAU ARG received a planning order for a second potential NEO in the African nation of Zaire. Coincidentally, the mission, named Operation *GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL*, would have the same participants as the recently completed NEO Exercise, *ISLAND THUNDER 97*.

The 26 MEU(SOC) Marines were still conducting security reinforcement operations at the US Embassy in Tirana, Albania, when the tasking was received to prepare for the crisis in Zaire. In early April 1997, the ARG split its forces, leaving two of the three amphibious ships on station in the Adriatic to support the Marines still engaged in Operation *SILVER WAKE*, sending *USS NASSAU* with the preponderance of the MEU(SOC) air combat element aircraft on board. Half of the ARG SEAL platoon embarked *USS NASSAU* with organic combat rubber raiding craft (CRRC) to provide NSW support to the force.

26 MEU(SOC) was tasked to provide a relief in place of the air-deployed SOF and conventional army NEO forces who had been sourced from Germany and Italy, respectively. Following the ten day transit to the operation area, key MEU(SOC) planners prepared to go ashore to the forward operating base in Brazzaville, Congo, just across the Congo River from the objective area of Kinshasa, Zaire.

As the 26 MEU(SOC) planners embarked the initial helo lift enroute to the Brazzaville, Congo, Forward Operating Base, the MEU(SOC) S3 told the NSW commander that there was no mission requirement for his SEALs in the helicopter-only CONOPS. It appeared that the afloat SEALs would spend the duration of the operation embarked on the amphibious shipping with no operational tasking, as was the case during Operation *ASSURED RESPONSE*.

However, later in the day, there was a change to the envisioned 26 MEU CONOPS following a JSOTF briefback that identified their (SOCEUR) SEALs as a quick reaction force prepared to conduct a riverine branch plan, if required. Consequently, the SEALs assigned to NASSAU ARG were reassigned TACON from the amphibious squadron to 26 MEU(SOC) in order to conduct the same riverine branch plan. The two SEAL elements conducted an extensive turnover, followed by the redeployment of the SOCEUR SEALs. The difference between this situation in which the ARG SEALs were used and *ASSURED RESPONSE* one year earlier was 26 MEU(SOC)'s requirement for a riverine capability. The SEALs possessed a unique capability that was not available within the split 26 MEU(SOC) organization.

### ***MIO SURGE OPS 99***

The final case study focuses on a naval effort in the North Arabian Gulf in which SOF forces were the main effort. Commander FIFTH Fleet (COMFIFTHFLT) tasked ENTERPRISE CVBG to conduct combined Maritime Interdiction Operations with Kuwait, UK, and Royal Netherlands forces in the shallow waters near the Iraq-Kuwait border. Planning factors such as shallow water and close proximity of potentially

belligerent Iraqi forces in the area of operations led MIO planners to choose NSW rather than destroyer squadron assets typically used for MIO taskings. The concept of operations had the SEALs conduct boardings using the cover of darkness and flir-capable helicopters for active force protection measures.

The significance of the operation with respect to this study was the task-organized NSW force that executed the missions. The two SEAL platoons and single SBU Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB) detachment from the CVBG and ARG were forward staged in Kuwait for combined mission planning and rehearsals with their foreign counterparts. SOCCENT provided additional SEAL assets TACON to the fleet for the duration of the operation, demonstrating the theater SOC's resolve to provide support to the fleet when required.

Each of these case studies demonstrated the dual-nature (fleet/SOC) of NSW deployments and the disparity between the employment of fleet vs. SOC NSW assets. It is clear that the NSW forces assigned to a theater SOC are employed to a much greater extent than their fleet counterparts. The studies suggest that the SEALs' "unique relationship with the fleet commanders" identified by Admiral Trost in 1987 may be counterproductive in the current joint operating environment. The SOC support to fleet operations during *ASSURED RESPONSE*, *INVITEX 97*, and *GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL* demonstrated the advantages of non-organic SOF assets used in lieu of traditional ARG-organic advance force operations.

The examples showcased SOF's unparalleled ability to quickly respond to the different situations with the appropriate force package. Although SOF mobility was a contributing factor, the key to SOCEUR's responsiveness was its command structure:

The CINC tasked the SOC commander who in turn executed the mission directly with the organic SOF assets at his disposal. Meanwhile, the NSW elements assigned to support the fleet (ARG) were standing by for taskings that were never to materialize through their naval command relationship, because the requirements were already being satisfied through the SOF command structure.

## Chapter 3

### Advance Force Operations

*An advance force is a subordinate task organization of the ATF [Amphibious Task Force] that precedes the main body to the landing area. Its function is to prepare the intended landing area for assault by conducting reconnaissance, MCM [Mine Countermeasures], preliminary bombardment, underwater demolition, and other operations as required.*

Joint Pub 3-02<sup>10</sup>

The advance force description above identifies several critical tasks that must be accomplished in support of amphibious operations. Execution of the reconnaissance and underwater demolition operations quoted above is the sole responsibility of Naval Special Warfare forces. Although some Marine Corps reconnaissance elements are trained to conduct hydrographic reconnaissance, their main focus is reconnaissance of landward objectives beyond the beach. Typical Naval Special Warfare/Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) advance force tasking assigns beach landing sites and landward objectives in the immediate vicinity of the coastline to SEALs.<sup>11</sup> Marine Reconnaissance elements are assigned objectives further inland from the coast. This delegation of tasking gives the Marine Expeditionary Unit Commander

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<sup>10</sup> Joint Pub (JP) 3-02, *Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, October 1992), II-17.

<sup>11</sup> The assignment of missions within the AOA for amphibious forces deploying in support of CINCEUR is established through the training overseen by II Marine Expeditionary Force's Special Operations Training Group.

the ability to use all of his reconnaissance assets on key objectives ashore while the SEALs satisfy the coastal reconnaissance requirements. In this respect, the SEALs are a force multiplier for the Marine commander. They are a means to satisfy his coastal priority intelligence requirements without tasking any of his organic forces.

The SEAL-exclusive nature of tactical hydrographic reconnaissance operations has resulted in the refinement of tactics, techniques, and procedures shared by no other unit in the world. This is the “unique” nature of Naval Special Warfare support to the fleet cited by Admiral Trost when he argued to retain fleet control of Naval Special Warfare rather than assign them to USSOCOM. The Navy requirement for the SEAL hydrographic reconnaissance capability coupled with the Marine Corps recognition of SEALs as a force multiplier is the foundation for the argument to ensure SEALs continue to deploy as organic members of Amphibious Ready Groups.

The opposing argument is to remove the Naval Special Warfare element from the Amphibious Ready Group, while still providing SEALs as necessary to provide the “unique” hydrographic reconnaissance tasks when an operational requirement arises. This is a very difficult concept for Navy and Marine Corps leaders to grasp. The naval service has self-sustainability as a paramount factor in its ability to conduct global power projection. Since the latter stages of World War II, the Navy’s ability to conduct amphibious operations using landing craft to gain access across a beach has been reliant on UDT (now SEAL) efforts to locate and clear beach landing sites for the craft. Sound planning and practical experience dictate that the logical location for these forces is co-located with the rest of the amphibious forces. The NSW assets embarked would provide IPB of the landing area and once finished, the landing force would begin sending craft

ashore. In a historical context, co-locating UDT/SEAL forces with the amphibious force is the right answer. However, technological advances in mobility assets and communications capabilities coupled with the emergence of joint doctrine have changed the nature of advance force operations.

The technological advances have resulted in a tremendous increase in the ability to employ small, highly mobile reconnaissance teams well ahead of the main amphibious force. The joint doctrine that changed the nature of advance force operations was the designation of theater commanders-in-chief and the establishment of theater specific Special Operations commands to provide dedicated joint SOF in direct support of theater taskings. The joint SOF assets can get to the AOA sooner than the embarked NSW forces on the ARG. As a result, the theater assets vice the embarked fleet assets are now meeting the IPB requirements.

### **Time Required for Conducting Advance Force Operations**

Performing tactical hydrographic reconnaissance in a clandestine manner is a time consuming evolution normally conducted under the cover of darkness. SEAL combat swimmers depart the amphibious squadron's advance force ship at a time late in the day to conduct an over-the-horizon ingress to the objective area via their organic NSW craft. The voyage is planned in a manner to arrive beyond visual range of the shoreline after last light. Upon arrival at a pre-determined starting point, the SEALs depart their insertion craft and begin the laborious task of swimming the actual reconnaissance. Throughout the process, the swimmers are collecting data and performing time

consuming tasks required to support landing force operations. The critical tasks associated with hydrographic reconnaissance efforts are:

- Identify optimal landing areas for landing craft.
- Locate obstacles posing a hazard to landing craft.
- Surf observation (meteorological) reporting.
- Determine beach trafficability.
- Locate and assess beach exits for landing force vehicles.

As the SEALs conduct their reconnaissance and accomplish the above tasks, amphibious shipping continues to close the beach with the embarked landing force making final preparations to deploy. The landing itself is extremely complex, requiring hundreds of synchronized tasks executed by shipboard sailors and Marine ground, air, and service support elements. The culmination of the process is to get the landing force ashore and across the beach in order to conduct follow on operations beyond the beach landing sites. The Naval Special Warfare element's ability to locate and ensure the feasibility of the landing sites is critical for successful execution of the operation.

Unfortunately, familiar training sites and the incentive to maximize scarce underway training periods have resulted in an unrealistic one-night advance force reconnaissance effort followed immediately by a pre-dawn H-Hour arrival of the landing force. Although it has become the norm as a result of decades of training, the single night advance force reconnaissance is dangerously unrealistic for real-world situations. Depending upon results of the initial hydrographic reconnaissance, Naval Special Warfare personnel may be required to conduct additional underwater demolition tasks to clear the beaches of obstacles that could pose a threat to landing craft, or the beach's physical characteristics may disqualify it as a suitable landing site. In either case, the



landing would not be possible until a suitable site was established or located through follow-on obstacle clearance or identification of an alternate landing location.

### **Supporting the Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)**

*In many cases, the Marine expeditionary unit (special operations capable) embarked on amphibious shipping will be the first U.S. force at the scene of a crisis and can conduct enabling actions for larger follow-on forces, whether a Marine expeditionary force, joint task force, or some other force.<sup>12</sup>*

#### *-MCDP-3 Expeditionary Operations*

The NSW Task Unit, operating from ARG shipping, is hindered in its ability to provide timely Special Operations support to the Amphibious Task Force and MEU (SOC) Commanders. NSW forces are unable to get to an objective from the ARG ships in time to prepare MEU(SOC) forces for follow-on action. Untimely mission tasking is one hindrance, and relatively slow mobility is another. By the time the ARG/MEU(SOC) team receives a contingency tasking and maneuvers the force to the crisis location, contingencies have often matured to the point that quick, decisive action is key to mission success. In such a situation, there is little time to prepare and deploy organic advance force units such as NSW and/or Marine Reconnaissance.

Analysis of the chapter two case studies suggests that the theater SOC would be a better alternative to ensure timely NSW support to ARG/MEU(SOC) operations. NSW assets assigned to the theater SOC routinely provide SOF support to the fleet while amphibious shipping is in transit to the operating area. The SOC NSW forces have provided the advance force support which enables the ARG/MEU(SOC) to commit their main force upon arrival. This timely SOF support has come as a result of the theater

commander's joint force structure and Joint Task Force tasking practices. The fleet NSW assets have been marginalized due to the mobility and time restraints associated with their assignment within the ARG (fleet) command structure.

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<sup>12</sup> Marine Corps Doctrine Pub (MCDP) 3, *Expeditionary Operations* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, April 1998), 76.

## Chapter 4

### Theater Special Operations Command Support to the Fleet

*Theater SOC [Special Operations Command]. To provide the necessary unity of command, each geographic combatant commander has established a subunified command to serve as the functional SO [Special Operations] component for the theater. The theater SOC performs broad continuous missions uniquely suited to SOF capabilities that are of strategic and operational importance to the geographic combatant commander. The theater SOC normally exercises OPCON of all assigned and attached SOF in theater.<sup>13</sup>*

—Joint Pub 3-05

The CINC tasks the theater SOC to provide SOF support to operations within the theater. The support ranges from providing tactical Special Operations forces to “... a fully staffed JSOTF to provide dedicated, focused planning and mission support for SOF forces”<sup>14</sup>, as well as “... the appropriate liaison to facilitate integration at all levels of the joint force.”<sup>15</sup> As the CINC’s SOF resident expert and facilitator, contingency taskings such as JTF orders identify the SOC as the dedicated Special Operations force provider.

The streamlined CINC-to-SOC command relationship detailed above is a great source of frustration for advocates who desire that all NSW forces be assigned to the theater SOC rather than as integral members of the fleet. The NSW element assigned to

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<sup>13</sup> Joint Pub (JP) 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 1998), III-2.

<sup>14</sup> JP 3-05, III-3.

<sup>15</sup> JP 3-05, III-8.

support the fleet is not assigned Special Operations missions because the mission tasking protocol identifies the theater SOC as the sole provider for SOF assets. As a result of their command relationship, the NSW fleet elements are greatly under-tasked throughout their six-month deployments, even when the demand for SOF forces is high.

Reassignment of the afloat NSW elements to the theater SOC would provide additional forces for use in such demanding periods. However, Navy/Marine Corps leaders are unconvinced that NSW support would be available through the SOC when needed. This is an unwarranted fear. First, the theater CINC would ensure that fleet assets were being supported with all available assets. When the need arose during Operations *SILVER WAKE* and *MIO SURGE OPS 99*, theater SOC forces had already been assigned TACON to naval task organizations, augmenting the dedicated fleet NSW in support of the Navy and Marine Corps operations. In the former, AC-130 gunships provided support to 26 MEU(SOC) NEO forces in the vicinity of the Albanian embassy. In the latter, SEALs from SOCCENT provided reconnaissance support to CTF 50 in support of Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO).

Theater planners are not the only ones unaware of the Special Operations capability afloat. Destroyer Squadron FIFTY planners responsible for the conduct of MIO within the Arabian Gulf were not aware that East Coast sourced aircraft carriers had an embarked SEAL platoon as part of their normal complement. When the squadron embarked *USS ENTERPRISE*, the Squadron Commodore happened across the NSW element commander assigned to the *ENTERPRISE* Battle Group. Following the encounter, the carrier-based SEALs were incorporated into the MIO operation which had previously been conducted solely by ARG based SEALs.

Another shortfall encountered by NSW elements assigned to support the fleet relates to the tempo of operations:

Successful execution of SO require centralized, responsive, and unambiguous C2. The limited window of opportunity normally associated with the majority of SOF missions as well as the sensitive nature of many of these missions require a C2 structure that is, above all, responsive to the needs of the operational unit.<sup>16</sup>

NSW planners participating on CVBG or ARG operational planning teams often find that when they do identify a potential NSW role in support of the assigned mission, there is not ample time to plan and execute their contribution because the window of opportunity for execution had passed. The CVBG and ARG C2 structures simply do not possess the responsiveness to effectively meet the needs of their NSW forces. Special Operations is not the focus of fleet task forces. Their afloat staffs are manned, equipped, and trained to support maritime/strike operations for the CVBG, and larger scale operations ashore in the case of the ARG.

The best way to realize the employment potentials described in both the Navy and Marine Corps operational concepts is to embrace “jointness” by leveraging the capabilities of theater Special Operations Commands. These sub-unified commands possess the force structure, responsiveness, and mobility assets to conduct true advance force operations in support of naval expeditionary operations. The general officer commanders of the theater Special Operations Commands have a single, well-focused requirement to provide Special Operations support to the CINC. As an example,

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<sup>16</sup> JP 3-05, III-1.

Commander, Special Operations Command Europe also serves as the European Command's Director, Special Operations Directorate:

The primary responsibilities of the Directorate for Special Operations (ECSO) are to plan and coordinate all in theater special operations (SO) activities, be the lead staff agency for all SO issues, request and coordinate the support of CONUS-based, JSCP-apportioned SOF, and advise USCINCEUR on all SO matters. Other major ECSO responsibilities include ... managing the USEUCOM Integrated Survey Program, and maintaining a capability to deploy an Assessment Team on short notice in support of USCINCEUR.<sup>17</sup>

As identified in the previous case studies, Naval Special Warfare units currently deployed in direct support of fleet assets would better shape the littoral area of influence by conducting early intelligence preparation of the battlefield using a Special Operations staff for mission planning, and Special Operations mobility support for mission execution.

The Special Operations missions typically conducted by SEALs are identified, planned, and executed through the Special Operations command structure much sooner than through the theater fleet command structure. Engaging the theater Special Operations Command is the theater Commander-in-Chief's first step towards conflict resolution when a crisis situation is identified. Engaging Special Operations forces early maximizes the effects of timing and tempo as vital aspects of joint operational art. Conversely, retaining Naval Special Warfare assets aboard the naval force negated their capability during Operations *ASSURED RESPONSE*, *SILVER WAKE*, and *GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL*. The Special Operations missions in support of all three Joint Task Forces had already been executed by theater Special Operations Command SEALs by the time

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<sup>17</sup>“USCINCEUR Special Operations Directorate Mission Statement”, downloaded from Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR) unclassified homepage, November 1999.

the naval forces arrived on station to execute their Joint Task Force mission requirements.

In each case, the operational tempo achieved enabled the campaign to progress at such a rate that the window for Special Operations support had come and gone before the afloat SEALs arrived on scene.

## Chapter 5

### NSW/MEU(SOC) Interoperability

The relationship between Naval Special Warfare and the Marine Corps is quite often tenuous. Disharmony frequently arises in training and while deployed as a result of command relationships and interoperability. Interoperability is an undefined term that can be considered the level of joint training achieved between two dissimilar units.<sup>18</sup> There is a difference of opinion between NSW and Marine Corps leadership with respect to the adequate level of interoperability between the MEU(SOC) and the corresponding NSW detachment scheduled to deploy within the same ARG. A great deal of the disharmony stems from the similar capabilities resident within the SEALs and reconnaissance Marines. Appendices A-C detail the Special Operations Forces, SEAL, and MEU(SOC) missions and capabilities.

Proponents of a highly detailed NSW/MEU interoperability training program fail to see the value-added capability a fully trained SEAL platoon provides to the amphibious ready group. Several Navy and Marine Corps staffs have advocated chopping the SEALs to the Marine Expeditionary Force Special Operations Training Group (SOTG) for the majority of the Marine Expeditionary Unit's inter-deployment

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<sup>18</sup> Interoperability is not found in English dictionaries, nor is it found in Joint Pub 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.



training cycle. Two factors preclude such an arrangement. First, SEAL platoon certification for deployment in a C-1 readiness status requires 12 months to complete.<sup>19</sup> There is not ample time available to commit a SEAL platoon to the entire SOTG training syllabus.

Second, and more importantly, incorporating the SEAL platoon as an integral part of the Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) Maritime Special Purpose Force<sup>20</sup> missions would decrease the amphibious ready group's operational capability. Rather than being available as a Special Operations force multiplier, the SEALs would be force listed within the Maritime Special Purpose Force. If used in that context, the SEALs would be unavailable to support other fleet or amphibious ready group taskings. Conversely, if the fleet tasked the SEALs to conduct a specific mission of their own, they would be unavailable as an integral Maritime Special Purpose Force asset. If trained as an integral part of the force, the absence of the SEALs may preclude the use of the entire force.

Just as a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) functions best when it is afforded the opportunity to fight as its own entity rather than as a maneuver element for a larger army organization, such is the case with a SEAL platoon supporting a Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). Interoperability between the Marines and SEALs should focus on tactics, techniques, and procedures that will enable the SEALs to use their own Special Operations tasks to support the Marine mission without incorporating the SEALs into the Marine unit's composite structure. Such a relationship

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<sup>19</sup> Fleet Exercise Publication (FXP)-6 (Rev. A) *Naval Special Warfare Exercises* (Norfolk, VA: Department of the Navy, June 1997), 4.1.

would maximize the capabilities of all concerned, especially in the context of command relationships and tactical communications.

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<sup>20</sup> Marine Corps Order 3120.9A, *Policy for Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)(MEU(SOC))*, (24 November, 1997), details the composition and missions of the task-organized Maritime Special Purpose Force.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion and Recommendations

*Simply to retain our effectiveness with less redundancy, we will need to wring every ounce of capability from every available source. That outcome can only be accomplished through a more seamless integration of service capabilities. To achieve this integration while conducting military operations we must be fully joint: institutionally, organizationally, intellectually, and technically.<sup>21</sup>*

*-Joint Vision 2010*

Analysis of selected operations that involved both fleet and theater Special Operations Command assets yields the conclusion that Naval Special Warfare elements assigned to the theater Special Operations Command were much more effective in accomplishing theater requirements than their counterparts assigned to support the fleet. The disparity between the two types of deployments can be attributed to three factors: command relationships, command responsibilities, and mobility.

The theater Special Operations command relationship is very well defined. Its battle staff is the single link between the theater CINC and the SOF forces executing the mission. It has the sole responsibility of providing Special Operations support to the theater CINC, and it possesses its own organic fixed wing, rotary wing, and Special

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<sup>21</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff Pamphlet, *Joint Vision 2010* (Washington, DC: 1996), 1.

Operations combatant craft for mobility. As a result, an extremely responsive, task-organized force can be deployed to a contingency hot spot in a matter of hours. Special Operations Command Europe's ability to immediately respond from the Secretary Brown mishap search and recovery effort to non-combatant evacuation operations in Liberia is an example of the theater Special Operations Command's effectiveness to employ its assigned SEALs in support of theater requirements.

Conversely, Naval Special Warfare elements assigned to Carrier Battle Groups and Amphibious Ready Groups operate within a command structure tailored for large-scale conventional operations such as strike warfare and amphibious operations. Neither task force is tasked with Special Operations missions. The Carrier Battle Group is responsible for planning and executing strike operations centered on its Carrier Air Wing and Tomahawk Land Attack Missile assets. As a result, its staff is manned and trained to support the same focus. It is not equipped to provide Special Operations tailored mission analysis and operational support to the embarked SEALs.

The ARG/MEU(SOC) team is responsible for planning and conducting expeditionary operations in the littoral environment. The ground-centric nature of these operations results in a staff better able to support Special Operations mission analysis and operations. However, like the CVBG, the ARG is not tasked with Special Operations missions. Since elements of the MEU(SOC)'s Maritime Special Purpose Force and the embarked SEALs share very similar reconnaissance and direct action mission capabilities (appendices A-C), there is a redundancy in all but the hydrographic reconnaissance missions. Unity of command dictates that the MEU(SOC) commander use elements under his own command if they are able to accomplish the mission before accepting

tactical control of a non-organic element such as a SEAL platoon. As a result, SEALs are not employed although they have the capability. The tendency towards unit cohesion rings true in theory and in practice as evidenced by the MEU(SOC) commander's decision not to employ SEALs in embassy security operations during Operations ASSURED RESPONSE and SILVER WAKE.

Another shortfall faced by Naval Special Warfare elements assigned in direct support of the fleet is mobility assets. In contrast to theater Special Operations Command forces that have dedicated platforms capable of non-stop theater-wide mobility, the SEALs embarked on aircraft carriers have combat rubber raiding craft<sup>22</sup> as their sole mobility asset. Tactical airlift is provided by the non-air refuelable Navy HH-60H helicopter whose aircrews specialize in Combat Search and Rescue flight profiles. Competing logistics support requirements and a limited combat radius resulting from the aircraft carrier's normal 100 plus nautical mile distance from shore reduce the overall effectiveness of the HH-60H support to Naval Special Warfare missions. During several instances of heightened tensions with Iraq, carrier based NSW elements forward deployed Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) teams ashore in Kuwait to reduce response times and flight distances in order to provide a credible CSAR capability for strike missions originating from the northern Arabian Gulf.<sup>23</sup>

SBU rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIB) provide organic NSW support within the Amphibious Ready Group. These capable craft have cruising speeds in excess of 35

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<sup>22</sup> A Combat Rubber Raiding Craft (CRRC) is a 4.7 meter inflatable boat powered by a 40-55 horsepower outboard motor. A typical NSW CRRC load is four combat equipped SEALs and 800 lbs of equipment.

<sup>23</sup> Land based forward CSAR detachments were used by *GEORGE WASHINGTON* CVBG forces in November 1997 as well as by *ENTERPRISE* CVBG forces in December 1998.

knots in favorable seas, with a combat radius greater than 100 nautical miles. The RHIB is the primary means of mobility for SEALs as a result of lack of dedicated helicopter support. The RHIB's combat radius and speed limits the NSW element's ability to get out ahead of the amphibious shipping during advance force operations. The limitation results in a diminished Naval Special Warfare area of influence. The same craft used in their air-deployable configuration from fixed wing aviation introduce a theater-wide response capability when assigned as SOF forces under the OPCON of a theater SOC.

In order to provide optimal SOF support to maritime operations, NSW forces should be assigned OPCON to theater SOF planners for operational tasking, mission planning, and operational support. Designated elements would surge forward as required to either afloat shipping, or a forward operating base in support of maritime taskings. Throughout JTG 99-1, NSW elements assigned to ENTERPRISE CVBG demonstrated that a SEAL platoon is not required on board to provide effective NSW support to the CVBG. On the contrary, the platoon's combat effectiveness increased when shore-based. Operational readiness was improved through sustainment training opportunities not available at sea, and by eliminating the restrictive time constraint associated with carrier flight deck operations increased responsiveness.

Because of the close ties with the amphibious force for hydrographic support and naval aviation in order to provide an organic CSAR ground force, full-time NSW representation is required for coordination and planning within the established CVBG and ARG battle rhythms. NSW forces deploying to the theater SOC must continue to conduct pre-deployment training with CVBG and ARG/MEU(SOC) deployers in order to establish requisite command relations and operating procedures. Dedicated LNOs

assigned to the Battle Group Staff and to the Amphibious Squadron for the duration of workups and deployment should be the conduit between the afloat planners and the forward deployed NSW fighting force.

The NSW elements assigned to NASSAU MARG 97-1 and ENTERPRISE CVBG 99-1 demonstrated the utility of working in concert with SOF forces ashore and mobility assets external to the CVBG and ARG in order to maximize support to the fleet. Although both of the NSW elements received unparalleled support from their respective staffs afloat, both task units lacked the operational responsiveness and theater employment experienced by the NSW elements assigned to the theater SOC during the same time periods.

Shore-based NSW forces are much more capable of providing Special Operations support to the ARG than the shipboard NSW Task Unit. European Command's Joint Task Force contingency deployments during Operations *ASSURED RESPONSE* in Liberia, *SILVER WAKE* in Albania, and *GUARDIAN RETRIEVAL* in Congo/Zaire demonstrated this point. In each instance, SOCEUR provided Special Operations support to the operations prior to the arrival and employment of naval forces.

As the naval force looks to the future and prepares for operations envisioned to occur within the littoral battlespace, its leadership has provided commander's guidance in the form of both Navy and Marine Corps operational concepts. Both concepts stress joint warfare as a critical component for future success. The Navy's "*Forward...from the Sea: The Navy Operational Concept*" details the naval service's role as an enabling force capable of providing lodgments for follow-on Army and Air Force deployers. The document states:

The keys to our enabling mission are effective means *in place* to dominate and exploit littoral battlespace during the earliest phases of hostilities.<sup>24</sup>

Efforts to ensure the domination of the littoral battlespace need to begin well before the earliest phases of hostilities. In the greater context of joint warfare, this is accomplished through shaping and intelligence preparation of the battlefield.

The Marine Corps operational concept “*Operational Maneuver from the Sea*” also advocates dominance of the littoral battlespace. The Marines seek battlespace dominance by using speed, mobility, and C2 systems to create an operational tempo that overwhelms their enemy:

In short, we will be able to act so quickly that the enemy will not be able to react effectively until it is too late...Operational Maneuver from the Sea emphasizes intelligence, deceptions, and flexibility...Operational Maneuver from the Sea integrates all organic, joint, and combined assets.<sup>25</sup>

The tempo envisioned by the Marine concept can only be achieved by acting on accurate and timely information from within the littoral battlespace. Just as it was with the Navy’s operational concept, the key to successful implementation of the Marine Corps’ operational concept is shaping and intelligence preparation of the battlefield.

Joint doctrine and theater practices identify SOF as an appropriate and desired asset for such shaping operations. SOF support is the best way to ensure the naval force is successful as a joint force enabler within the littoral environment. The maritime nature of the littoral battlespace identifies NSW as the force of choice to provide SOF support to the naval force in such an environment. In order to maximize mission success, it would

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<sup>24</sup> Department of the Navy Pamphlet, *Forward...from the Sea: The Navy Operational Concept* (Washington, DC: 1997), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps Pamphlet, *Operational Maneuver from the Sea* (Washington, DC: 1996), 6.



be in the best interest of the naval force to have all available NSW assets operating within the SOF command structure as opposed to the traditional deployment of selected NSW elements as organic members of fleet deployers. The proposed change would ensure the Navy and Marine Corps team receives the benefits of maximum utilization of SEALs and NSW combatant craft within today's joint-centric theaters of operation, and within the dynamic littoral battlespace envisioned in joint and service-specific future operational concepts.

## Appendix A

# Special Operations Forces Missions and Collateral Activities<sup>26</sup>

### Missions:

- a. Direct Action (DA)
- b. Special Reconnaissance
- c. Foreign Internal Defense
- d. Unconventional Warfare
- e. Combatting Terrorism
- f. Psychological Operations
- g. Civil Affairs
- h. Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- i. Information Operations

### Collateral Activities:

Coalition Support  
Combat Search and Rescue  
Counterdrug Activities  
Countermining Activities  
Foreign Humanitarian Assistance  
Security Assistance  
Special Activities

Derived from 10 USC 164, 10 USC 167, UCP.

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<sup>26</sup> JP 3-05, II-4.

## Appendix B

### Naval Special Warfare Mission Essential Tasks<sup>27</sup>

#### Primary Mission Area NSW:

Stand-off Weapons Engagement  
Combat Search and Rescue  
Close Air Support  
Naval Gunfire Support  
Sniper  
Combat Swimmer Ship Attack  
Shipboard/Offshore Platform Assault  
Raid  
Tactical Ambush  
Military Operations Urban Terrain  
Close Quarters Combat  
Selected Personnel Abduction/Recovery  
Foreign Internal Defense  
Contingency Recall and Mount-out Skills  
Mission Planning

#### Primary Mission Area Mobility:

Static-line Combat Equipment Paratroop  
Static-line/Military Free-fall Water Paratroop  
Military Free-fall Insertion  
Combat Rubber Raiding Craft Paratroop Insertion  
Air Delivered Resupply Bundle  
Helicopter Insertion/Extraction  
Helicopter Rappelling  
Helicopter Fast Rope  
Helicopter Personnel Cast and Recovery  
Combat Rubber Raiding Craft Helocast Insertion  
Helicopter Tethered Duck Insertion  
Special Purpose Insert Extract (SPIE)  
Shortfield Insertion/Extraction  
Over-the-horizon Combat Rubber Raiding Craft Navigation

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<sup>27</sup> FXP- 6 (Rev. A), 4.1.

Riverine Infiltration/Exfiltration  
Rendezvous at Sea  
Submarine Operations (Lock-in/Lock-out)  
Submarine Surface Launch and Recovery  
Desert Patrol Vehicle  
Combat Scaling

Primary Mission Area Command, Control, and Communication

Very High Frequency LOS Vox/Burst Communication  
Ultra-High Frequency LOS Vox/Burst Communication  
High Frequency Short Range Vox/Burst Communication  
High Frequency Medium Range Vox/Burst Communication  
High Frequency Long Range Vox/Burst Communication  
Satcomm Vox/Burst Communications  
KL-43C Transmissions  
Long Range Communications Skills Proficiency  
Digital Imagery/Data Transmission

Primary Mission Area Intelligence:

Area Recon Patrol  
Point Recon  
Indications and Warnings  
Battle Damage Assessment Reporting  
Target Analysis Assessment  
Shipboard Security  
Chemical Agent Monitoring

Primary Mission Area Amphibious Warfare:

Nearshore Hydrographic Reconnaissance (Combat)  
Beach Feasibility Reconnaissance  
Nearshore/Foreshore Obstacle Clearance  
Channel Blasting  
Nearshore Submerged Hydrographic Reconnaissance  
Surface Boat Hydrographic Survey  
Riverine Hydrographic Reconnaissance

## Appendix C

### MEU(SOC) Capabilities<sup>28</sup>

#### Amphibious Operations:

Assault  
Raid  
Demonstration  
Withdrawal

#### Direct Action:

In Extremis Hostage Rescue  
Gas and Oil Platform Seizure  
Specialized Demolition Operations  
Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel  
Seizure/Recovery of Selected Personnel or Material  
Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction  
Vessel Boarding Search and Seizure

#### Military Operations Other Than War:

Peacekeeping  
Peace Enforcement  
Joint/Combined Training Team  
Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief  
Security Operations  
Non-combatant Evacuation Operations  
Reinforcement Operations

#### Supporting Operations

Tactical Deception Operations  
Initial/Terminal Guidance  
SIGINT/EW Operations  
Military Operations in an Urban Environment  
Reconnaissance and Surveillance  
Fire Support Planning, Coordination, and Control  
Counter Intelligence

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<sup>28</sup> Marine Corps Order 3120.9A.

Airfield/Port Seizure  
Expeditionary Airfield Operations  
Show of Force Operations  
JTF Enabling Operations  
Sniping Operations

## *Glossary*

AFSOF	Air Force Special Operations Force
AOA	Amphibious Objective Area
ARG	Amphibious Ready Group
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Force
CINC	Commander in Chief
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
CVBG	Carrier Battle Group
DA	Direct Action (mission)
EUCOM	European Command
IPB	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
JSOA	Joint Special Operations Area
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JTF	Joint Task Force
JV	Joint Vision
LNO	Liaison Officer
MEU(SOC)	Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)
MIO	Maritime Interdiction Operation
MSLO	Mass Swimmer Lock Out
NAVSOF	Naval Special Operations Force
NAVSPECWARCOM	Naval Special Warfare Command
NEO	Non-combatant Evacuation Operation
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
NSWTU	Naval Special Warfare Task Unit
OPCON	Operational Control
PC	Patrol Coastal
RHIB	Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat
SBU	Special Boat Unit
SDV	SEAL Delivery Vehicle
SEAL	Sea, Air, Land
SOC	Special Operations Command
SOCEUR	Special Operations Command, Europe
SOF	Special Operations Force
TACON	Tactical Control
UDT	Underwater Demolition Team
USCINCSOC	Commander in Chief, United States Special Operations Command
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command

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